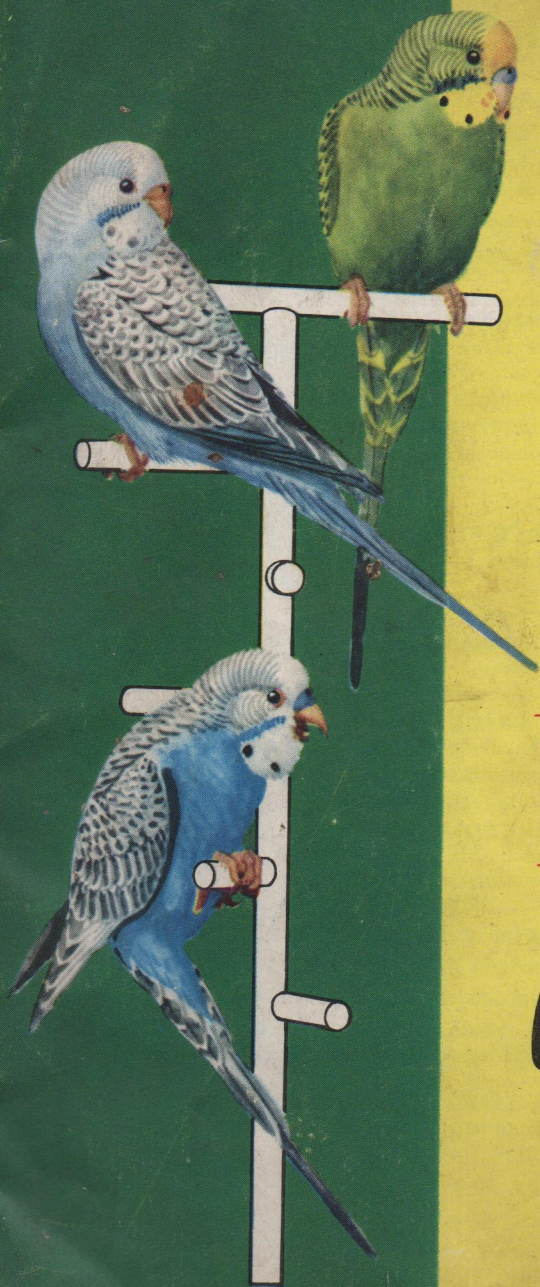


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Budgies
are fun!

If you have ever seen a budgie push a toy pram, climb a ladder, or hang upside down in his cage while he recites a poem, you know what fun these colourful little pets can be. They are inexpensive to own, simple to take care of, and as happy in the smallest flat as in the largest house. This book tells exactly how to train and care for them. Below is a partial list of subjects covered. See page 30 for detailed index.

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The information in this book was prepared under the supervision of the Staff of French's Pet Bird Institute. For further information about this Institute, see inside back cover.

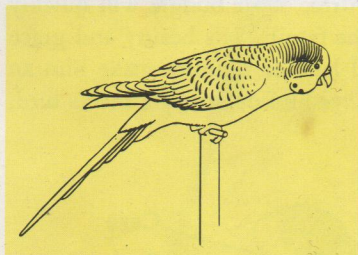
The life-like full colour illustrations were painted from live bird models by the well-known ornithological artist William C. Dilger.

PRINTED IN ENGLAND

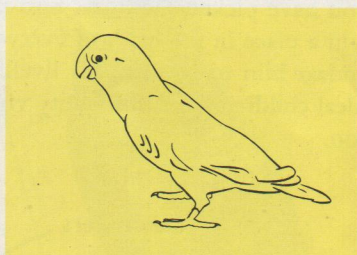
FRIENDLY FEATHERED PETS

The bright little birds with the slender bodies and long, narrow tails shown in this book are descendants of a species of wild, migratory parakeet, native to the grasslands of Australia. They are known by a variety of names.

In England, Canada and Australia, where they have been popular the longest, they are called budgerigars, or more affectionately "budgies." These same birds are sometimes referred to as "love birds," although another branch of the parrot family has a prior claim to the name. True love birds are chunky little parrots with shorter tails, native to Africa and South America. In America budgerigars are called parakeets, or simply "keets."



Budgerigar or "budgie"



African Lovebird

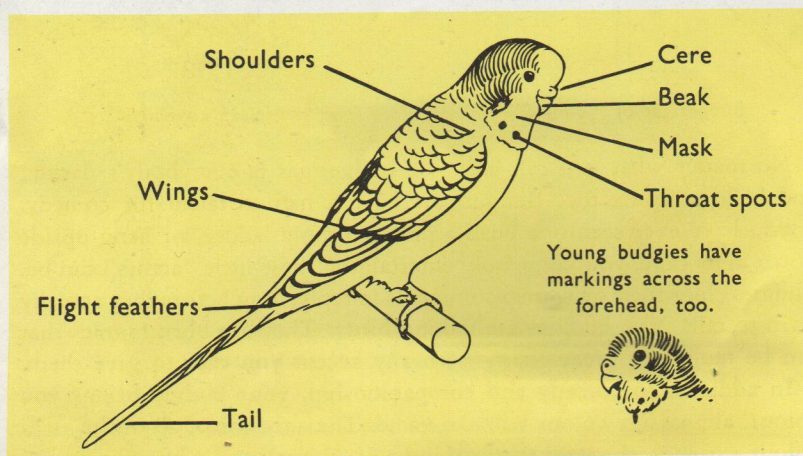
No matter what you call him, the budgerigar is everybody's darling and he'll be yours too. Budgerigars have a natural talent for comedy. If you have ever seen one push a pram, climb a ladder, or hang upside down in its cage, you know how entertaining these little "actors" can be. Budgies chirp their own crisp comments in reply, long before they actually learn to talk. Yes, budgies are talking birds. They are born mimics that can be taught to greet guests with any accent you care to give them.

In addition to comedy and companionship, your budgie brings you colour, almost any colour you can name. The ancestor of all our present colour varieties, the wild shell parakeet of Australia, is a small bird with green and yellow plumage. From this ancestor, breeders have developed three basic colour groups: green, blue and yellow. Within each of these groups are light, medium and dark shades. In the green and yellow groups these shades are known as light, dark and olive, respectively. In the blue group, the three shades emerge as sky-blue, cobalt-blue, violet and mauve. But this relatively simple classification quickly becomes compli-

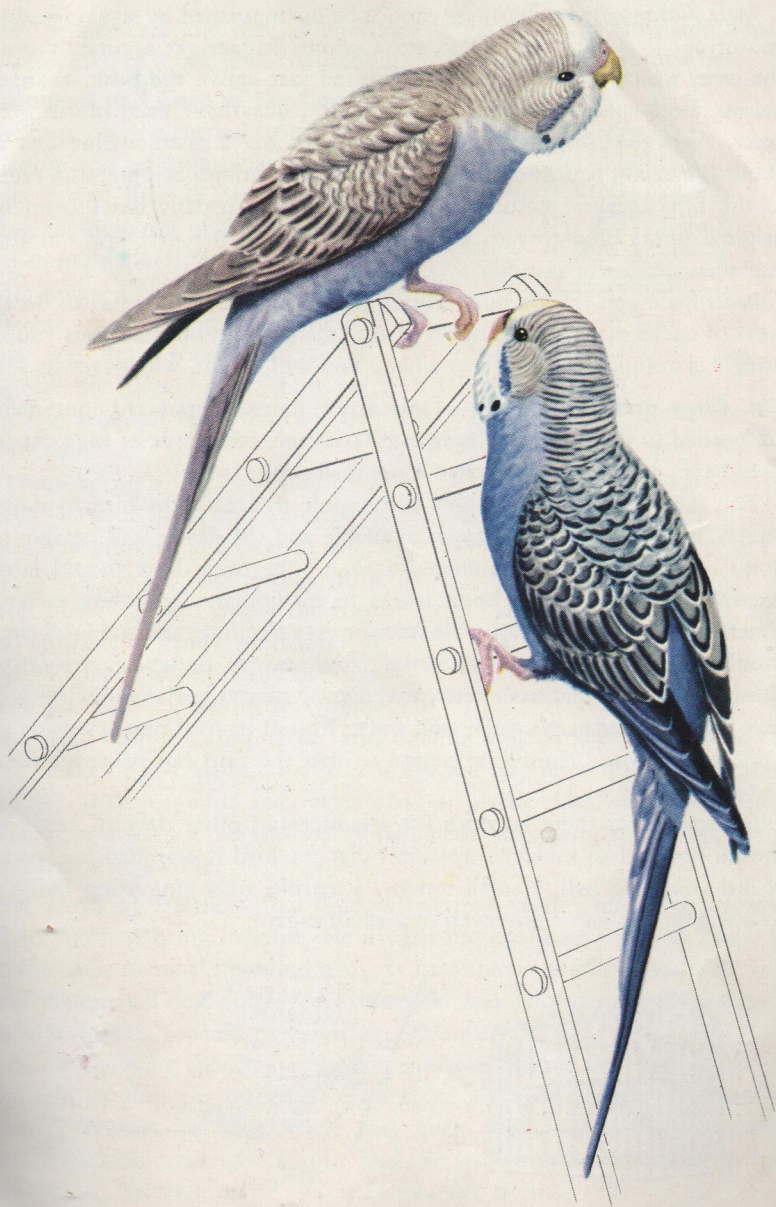
cated by all the possibilities for combinations of the three basic colours and by the markings, which may be in black, grey or cinnamon.

There are also albino budgerigars, which are clear white with pink eyes, and lutinos, which are usually clear yellow with red eyes. Another rare variation is the bi-colour, a bird clearly divided right down the centre of the head, breast, and back into two distinct colours, as for example, blue on one side and green on the other. In addition, there are piers or harlequins, which are normal coloured budgies with patches of white or yellow.

Personality is the Key—Colour has nothing to do with the ability of budgerigars to learn, so you can select the colouring that appeals most to you. The important things to look for are personality and good health. You can safely choose whichever bird strikes your fancy, because the budgie's natural liveliness and intelligence will soon convince you that you have picked the finest bird in the world. Your budgie will quickly win a place in the heart of everyone in the family. His beauty and grace endear him to women; his liveliness and lack of timidity make him an ideal children's pet; his jaunty vigour makes him definitely a man's bird, too.



Age and Sex—Most of the budgerigars available from pet dealers are comparatively young birds. While older birds can be taught to talk and do tricks, the younger ones usually learn more readily. Most young budgies have rows of thin, dark markings across their foreheads. These



markings disappear gradually until, by the age of four to five months, the forehead and crown are clear in colour, back to the eye.

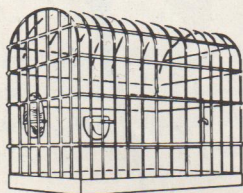
Male and female budgerigars cannot be distinguished by size or feather colouring. It is very difficult to sex a young budgerigar accurately until the cere, which is the fleshy band located just above the beak, changes colour. Both male and female budgerigar chicks have pale, bluish grey ceres. As a rule, the male budgerigar's cere has a distinct blue cast at about the age of four months, and the colour becomes brighter and bluer as the bird reaches maturity. The female's cere usually fades from its original light, blue-grey to almost white during the first few months, and then gradually assumes a tan or brown colour.

Both male and female budgerigars can be taught to talk and to do all sorts of tricks, so you need not wait anxiously to see whether your young budgie is going to be a cock or a hen. You will love it, whichever its sex.

The Cage and Accessories—Only a few items of standard equipment are needed to care for your budgerigar—a cage, some type of cage cover, a seed cup, a water cup, and two more feed cups.

The cage should be as roomy as possible to enable the bird to move freely. You will find many types available and the dealer will be able to point out the special advantages of each. The cage door should latch securely: a clever budgie soon learns to manipulate the sliding variety. The floor should be a removable tray for easy cleaning, and the food cups should be easily removable for the same reason. Budgerigars love to climb, and a cage that has a few conveniently spaced horizontal wires will give him a better grip on the side walls. Round or oval perches made of smooth hardwood should be placed so that the bird can reach his food and water easily.

In most cages there is room for a ladder and other devices, but you should not add so much "furniture" that the bird is cramped for space. A little hanging bell, a small mirror, a marble, or a ping-pong ball are toys the budgie can enjoy even in a small cage.



GENERAL CARE AND FEEDING

With proper care and diet, budgerigars often remain healthy and alert for ten years, or more. This chapter tells how to keep them at their best.

Placement and Care of the Cage

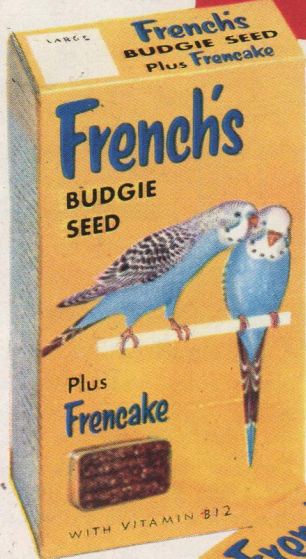
The cage may be carried from room to room and set on a table, or hung from a wall bracket or cage stand. Keep the cage out of direct sunlight and draughts; and be sure your pet will not be subject to sudden, extreme changes in temperature. Cats and dogs soon learn to recognize the budgie as a family pet, but it is safer to place the cage out of reach.

Housekeeping for a budgie is easy. The seed, treat and water cups should be emptied and cleaned daily. Every day or so, set the cage on a sheet of newspaper, empty the tray, and sprinkle it with a fresh layer of French's Budgie Grit. Keep the cage itself clean by occasionally wiping the bars with a damp cloth and dusting out corners where bits of seed husks or grit may be lodged. Wash the tray regularly in hot water and dry. If the cage has removable glass or plastic sides, wash these too. Perches should not be washed. When necessary, scrape them smooth and clean with a knife.

First Days at Home—Your budgerigar may seem timid and drowsy when you first bring it home. He usually requires a few days to become accustomed to new surroundings. At first move quietly when you are near your pet. Loud noises or excitement may frighten a new bird and make it difficult for you to win his confidence.

Sit or stand by the cage whenever you can during the first few days, and talk to your pet in a soft, calm voice. Cover the cage early in the evening at first. A new budgie may even want to "nap" during the day. If you do not frighten your bird, he will soon feel "settled" in his new home. Before long he will be his playful, friendly self.





It sometimes takes a few days for a new bird to become used to eating and drinking from the regular cups. If your pet does not find his cups right away, place a few tablespoonfuls of French's Budgie Seed and a small jar top filled with water on the floor of the cage after filling the regular feed and water cups. Once your pet starts eating from the regular cups, stop placing the extra seed and water on the cage floor.



French's Natural Feeding Diet—Wild budgerigars in nature find a vast array of foods from which to choose. Although they are primarily seed eaters, they instinctively search their natural surroundings for a wide variety of other foods that round-out their diets. Your own budgie needs a varied fare to keep healthy, happy, full of life and fun.

You can easily supply just such a complete, tasty menu with French's Natural Feeding Diet. The items in this balanced diet supplement one another to provide all the important food elements pet budgies would select for themselves if they were free.

Feeding French's Natural Diet is a simple matter. Here is all you do: Every day fill the seed cup with fresh French's Budgie Seed; fill another food cup with French's Budgie Treat; fill a further food cup with French's Budgie Conditioning Food, and rinse and refill the water cup.

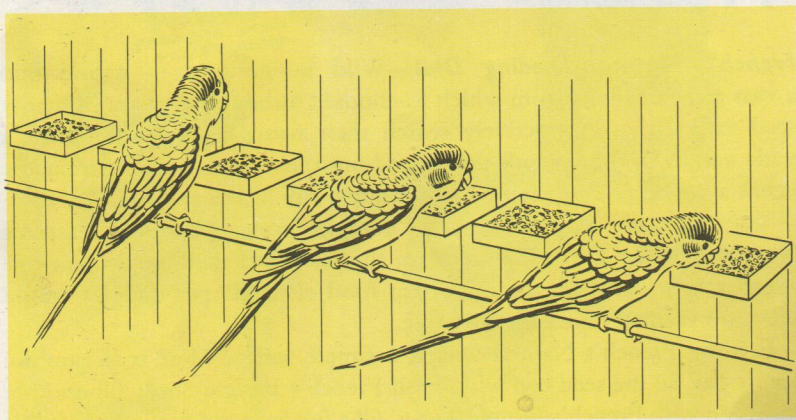
Always keep a French's Budgie Cuttle Bone and a French's Frencake attached to the cage bars, and a layer of French's Grit on the cage floor. No fruits, wheat-germ oil, vitamin or cod liver oil preparations are needed except under special circumstances. French's pet food scientists have formulated this Natural Feeding Diet to include everything your pet needs to stay in top condition.

The important thing to remember is that all of these items should be available to your pet at all times. Budgerigars eat almost constantly and cannot live for more than a short period of time without food. Husks

from the seeds they eat sometimes fall back in the cups and cover the uneaten food. Always remove these useless husks when filling the food cups.

The "Main Course"—While breeders who raise budgerigars on a large scale sometimes purchase seeds in bulk and mix them themselves, it is more economical and convenient for owners of a few budgerigars to buy fresh packeted seeds. French's careful selection of raw materials, and modern, sanitary processing and packaging methods, assure fresh, nourishing seeds, free of chaff, dust, or other harmful impurities.

French's Budgie Seed and Frencake make the ideal "main course" for your budgie. The seed itself is a controlled mixture of air-washed millet and canary seeds. The tempting, specially shaped Frencake found in every large packet of French's Budgie Seed supplies vigour-building elements that add variety to your pet's diet, improve feathering, sharpen his appetite, and aid the digestion of all his food.



Treat and Conditioning Food—Your pet is sure to enjoy his daily cup of French's Budgie Treat. Before formulating this product, French's Pet Bird Institute scientists selected a great number of different nourishing seeds and placed them in separate feeding cups so that a group of test budgerigars would have free choice. The consumption of each of these seeds was carefully recorded week after week. Finally, a formula was developed that contained the exact proportions of the best-liked seeds with the greatest nutritious variety. The result was the mixture of seven favourite seeds found in French's Budgie Treat—a treat that is naturally good for budgerigars.

Although French's Budgie Conditioning Food is usually eaten in

smaller quantities, it is specially important to your budgie's health. This concentrated health food, which contains milk protein and dried egg yolk, helps supply the benefits of the extra greens and vitamin-rich supplements your budgie would look for in nature every day. French's Treat and Conditioning Food are both enriched with wheat germ, yeast, vitamin A-D concentrate, and vitamin B₁₂ supplement.

Cuttle Bone, Grit, and Water —

In addition to the minerals found in French's Budgie Seed, Frencake, Treat, and Conditioning Food, budgerigars need the calcium in French's Cuttle Bone for all-round good health. Pecking at the Cuttle Bone is good exercise and helps keep their beaks in trim. Your pet should always have a Cuttle Bone available near one of his favourite perches. The metal holder provided in each package makes it easy to attach the bone to the cage bars.

Grit is essential to budgerigars, because they have no teeth. They swallow grit to grind their seeds into soft, easily digested form. French's Budgie Grit resists chemical decomposition by the bird's powerful digestive juices and retains its many edges so that your pet can grind his food properly. Keep a layer of this carefully screened grit on the cage floor, and change it often enough to keep it fresh and clean.

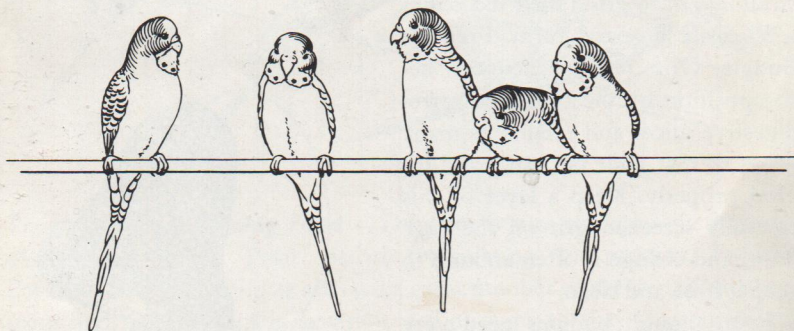
Even though budgies need very little drinking water, clean water should always be available where your budgie can reach it. Be sure to empty and rinse the water cup thoroughly each day before refilling.



Extra Treats—Although the items in French's Natural Feeding Diet supply all the known nutritional needs of a budgerigar, most owners like to provide their pets with an extra delicacy now and then. While your budgie may enjoy being given a tit-bit of human food now and then, frequent feeding of rich, human food may upset his digestion, or curb his appetite for the natural foods he needs to keep him at his best.

However, your pet will enjoy and benefit from having a French's Budgie Bell, which is actually a toy made of wholesome seeds with a tiny metal bell attached. Hang the Budgie Bell from the top of your pet's cage and watch the fun he has with it.

Moulting—Moulting, or loss of feathers, is a normal process for budgerigars as it is for other birds, but there is one difference; it does not occur at regular intervals or in well-defined periods. During the first, or baby moult, which normally takes place before the budgie is four months old, the baby feathers are replaced by brighter, more distinct plumage. After this first moult, your budgie will lose a few feathers at a time every now and then. Although this is quite normal, feather replacement does somewhat tax the bird's resources. Always make sure that your pet has ample supplies of all the items of French's Natural Feeding Diet available to him. The Conditioning Food, in particular, is rich in the minerals, vitamins, and proteins necessary for feather production.



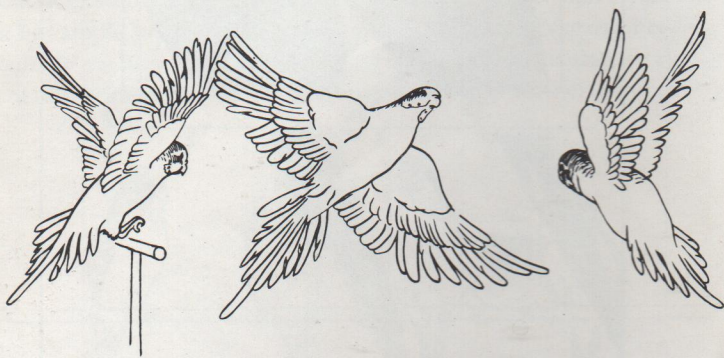


TAMING AND FREE FLIGHT

Finger Taming—You are naturally eager to have your budgie learn to talk and do tricks. The first step is to win the bird's confidence by teaching it to perch on your finger. You can start as soon as the bird is well settled in its new home and accustomed to having you near the cage.

Approach the cage slowly, repeating the bird's name in a soft voice. Open the cage door just enough to admit your hand. Repeat "perch" and your pet's name while you slowly move your extended forefinger towards him. Budgerigars have a natural tendency to perch on anything held before them, and your pet will probably step on to your finger without much hesitation. If it doesn't, gently nudge its chest. If the bird seems frightened, keep your hand still and try again after he settles down.

Repeat this perching exercises until your budgerigar steps readily to your finger on request. Soon he will not only perch on your finger, but will sit quietly while you move your hand within the cage.

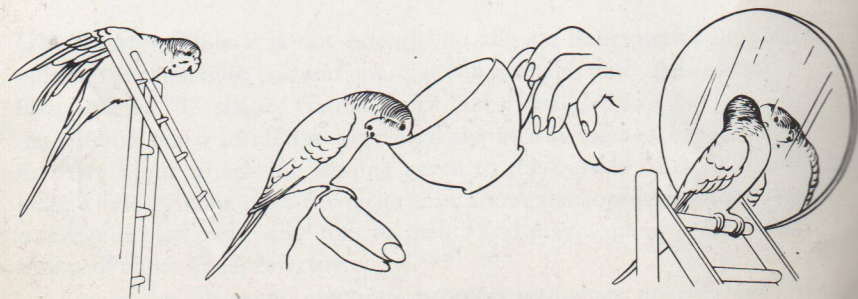
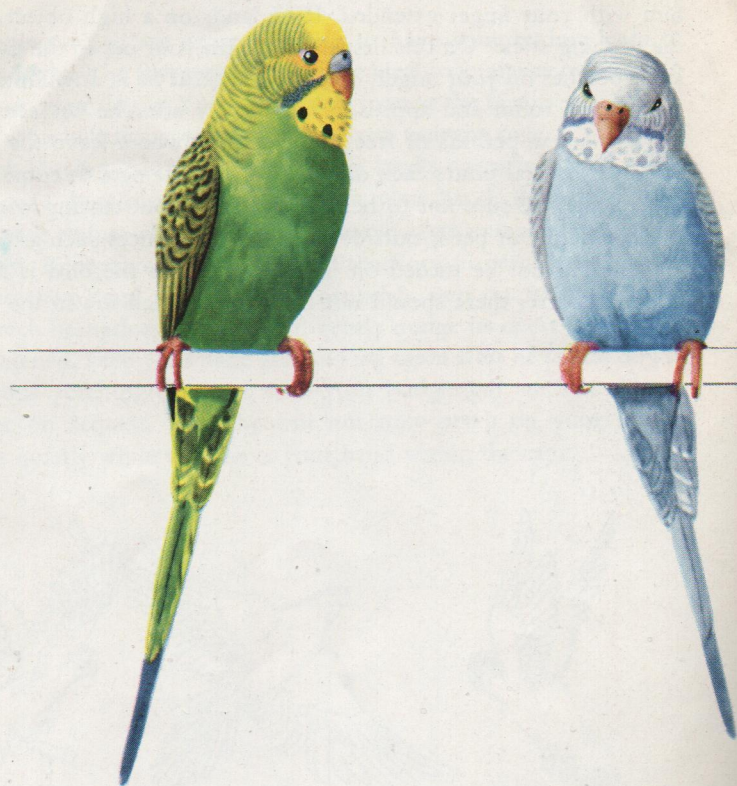


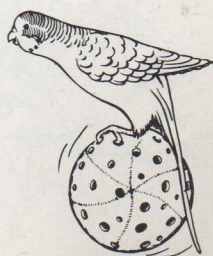
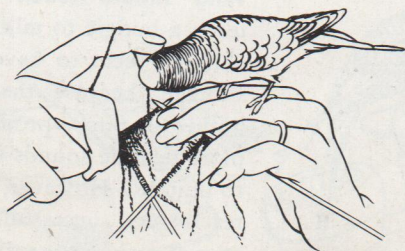
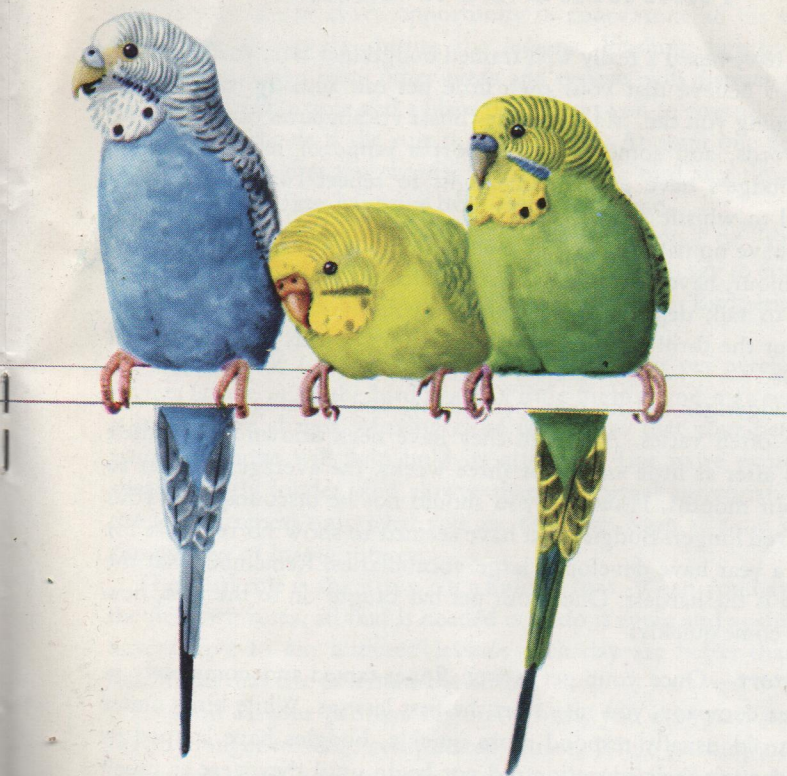
Free Flight—While it is not essential to allow a budgerigar to exercise outside the cage, both you and your pet will probably enjoy the experience. First obtain a "T" shaped training stick and a small landing perch. Leave the landing perch inside the cage until the bird is used to it. Before the first free flight, attach the landing perch to the outside of the cage and place a few of your pet's favourite toys about the room where you can reach your bird easily if he flies to them. You may want to place a small square of paper under each toy.

Close all the doors and windows, prop open the cage door and lift the bird out of the cage on your finger. Your pet may bump against walls

and ceiling until he learns to gauge distances. Remain quiet until he has landed somewhere. If he lands within reach, repeat "perch" and approach him with your finger extended. If he lands on a high object, offer him the training stick. On this first flight return your pet to the cage as soon as he perches on your finger, or on the stick. If he is unwilling to return, darken the room and approach him slowly after he has settled down.

After a few periods of free flight, many owners leave the cage door open for several hours each day and allow their pets to come and go as they please. Be sure not to become careless about closing windows and doors when your pet is outside the cage. Appliances such as heaters and fans should not be turned on in a room where the bird is flying free, and, of course, there should not be an unguarded fire in the room.





TRAINING FOR TALK

Unless you have heard a really well-trained budgerigar talk, you may find it difficult to believe that your own little pet can actually learn to say almost anything you can. Many budgies boast vocabularies of fifty to one hundred words, and some owners report a range of more than two hundred. Budgies have even been taught to repeat complete nursery rhymes and to whistle simple tunes.

Budgies have no natural song of their own; but all of them, regardless of sex or colour, have a natural ability to imitate sounds. How well your pet learns to talk depends principally on you. It does take time and patience, but the thrill of hearing your pet's first words will make it all worth-while.

Every budgerigar has its own personality, and learning-time for the first words often varies. Although they have been known to say their first words after as little as two or three weeks, the average is closer to three to four months. However, you should not be discouraged if your pet takes even longer. Budgies that have seemed to show no response for as long as a year have developed large vocabularies. Remember that the first phrase is the hardest. Once your pet has caught on to the idea, new words will come quickly.

When to start—Once your pet is well finger-tamed and completely at ease in your company, you may start the first lessons. While birds under six-months old usually respond more quickly, budgies have learned to talk, even though their education did not begin until they were as much

as three years old. Whatever the age, start as soon as your pet is convinced that you are his friend.



Who should teach—Anyone can teach a budgie to talk. Women and children seem to have a slight advantage, because their voices are higher in pitch, producing clearer, more definite sounds for the budgie to imitate. However, a man can teach very successfully if he takes special pains to make his words distinct.

How to do it—The first rule is the **RULE OF NO SURPRISE**. Your pet must be given every opportunity to concentrate all his attention on what you are saying during the lessons. Flashing lights, unexpected visitors, or sound from other birds and people, will distract and confuse your pet. Select a time and a place that allows you to control these factors.

The second rule is the rule of **ONE ONLY**. Appoint one person as the teacher for the first few words, teach only one bird at a time; teach just one phrase at a time; have one brief session at a time.

Begin with a simple phrase such as "Peek-a-boo," or "Pretty Bird." Pick a phrase that would be amusing for the bird to say to someone else, and remember that it may be repeated to anyone. Budgerigars cannot be expected to put on "party manners" for visitors.

It is desirable to conduct the lessons with your pet perched on your finger. However, if the bird is still a little flighty, you may want to keep it in the cage at first. Moving close enough so that your pet can watch your lips move will help hold its attention. Use more expression, and speak slightly louder, and slower than in normal conversation. During the lesson, repeat only what you are teaching. Stop as soon as your pet shows sign of losing interest.

The third rule is the **RULE OF REPETITION**. When you have observed the first two rules, all that is needed is to do it again and again and again. Several five to ten minutes' lessons each day are better than one long lesson that may tire or irritate the bird.

As soon as your pet says his first words, you may start on a second, slightly longer or more complicated phrase. While teaching new phrases, review what has already been learnt in the order the words were first taught. Otherwise, your pet may forget them in the excitement of adding new words.

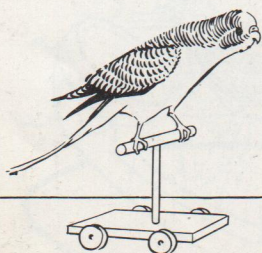


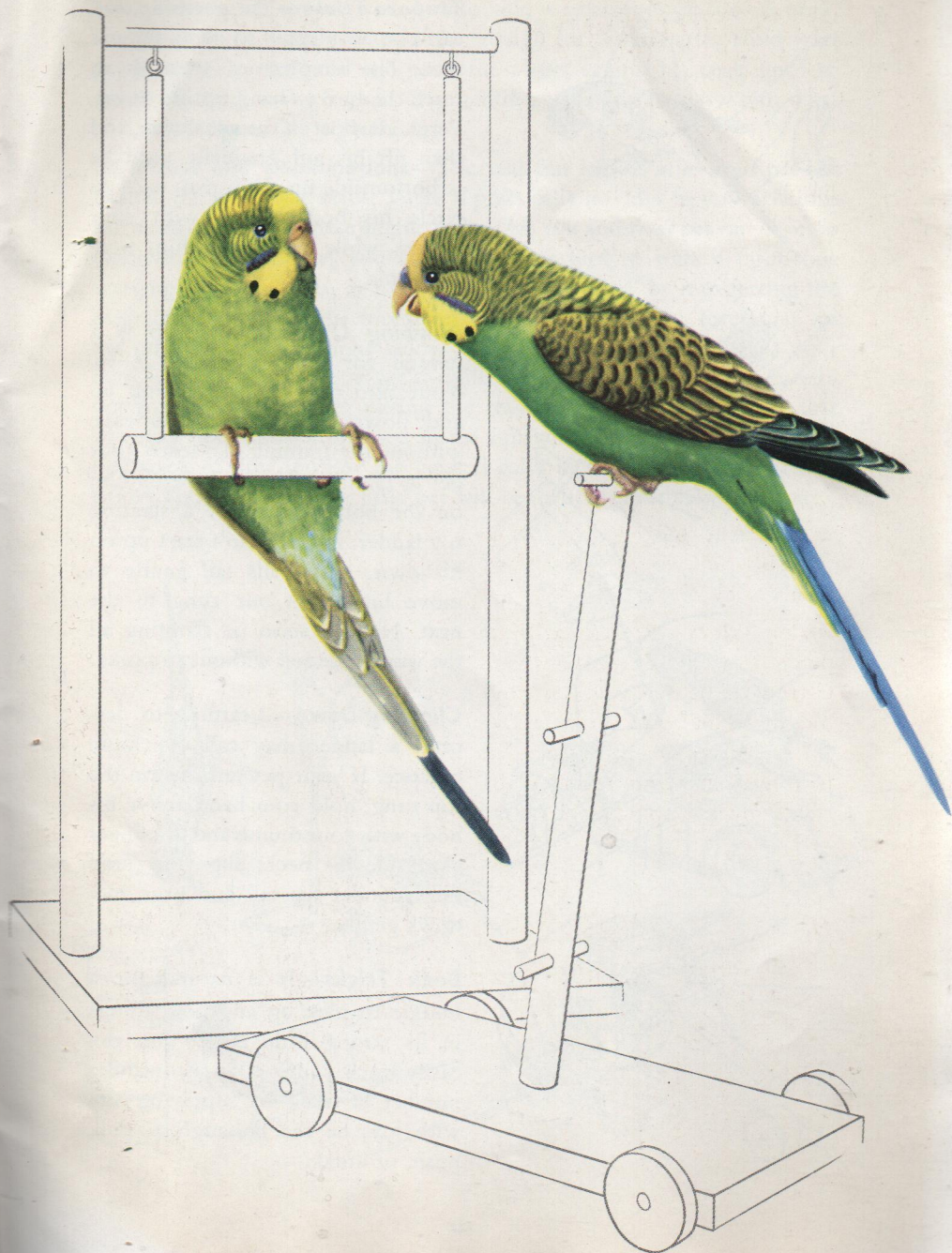
TRAINING FOR TRICKS

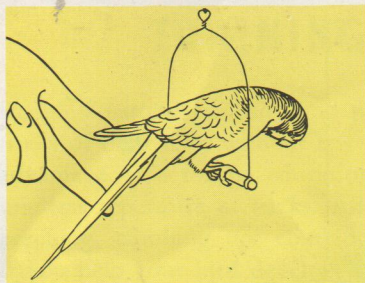
Budgies' natural curiosity and playfulness lead them to develop many tricks of their own without any coaching, but if you give your pet the advantage of a formal education, he can reward you with an almost limitless repertoire of tricks. All budgie tricks are based on four skills: perching, climbing up, climbing down, and grasping with the beak. If you help your bird develop these skills, you can soon have him performing all kinds of seemingly complicated stunts.

General Rules—The first rule is to show your budgie what you expect of it. Place his beak around the object you want him to carry, set him on the toy you want him to ride, nudge his tail slightly to show him the direction you want him to go. Repeat the process until the bird understands what action is desired. If you are gentle with your pet and have earned his confidence, he will be anxious to please you and will respond readily. Most budgies love an audience and once they learn a few tricks they actually enjoy going through their routine. In fact, your pet will probably practice the tricks when he is alone, and add a few embellishments of his own.

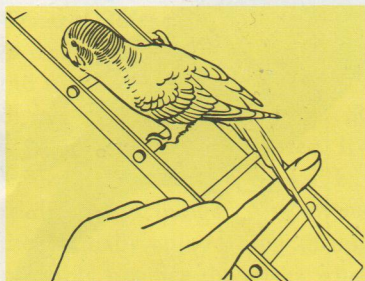
Riding Tricks—Riding tricks are easy once your bird has learned to perch. Your pet dealer has a variety of wheeled toys that have perches. Carry your pet to the toy on your finger, or on the training stick. Move him up to the perch on the toy and he will probably hop on by himself. If he seems frightened at first, put him down near the toy and let him investigate it before trying again. Many birds enjoy being towed on a riding toy or zipping along by themselves on a toy car or train.



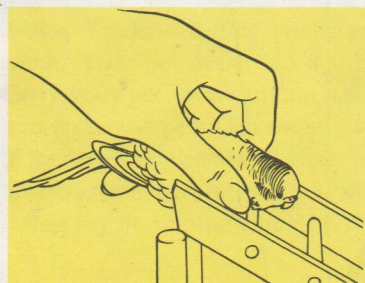




Trapeze Tricks—The perching skill can also be adapted to many trapeze acts. The simplest of these is to teach the bird to hang upside down. Perch your pet in the usual way, and then lift his tail gradually until he is bottomsides up. You may need to circle his body gently with your fingers while you show him how to do this.



Climbing Up—Climbing up is a natural for budgies as for boys. Your bird probably will climb up and down the walls of its cage without any training. To teach your pet to climb on demand, perch him on the bottom rung of a slanting toy ladder. If he doesn't start up on his own, nudge his tail gently to move him from one rung to the next. He will soon be scooting all the way to the top without stopping.



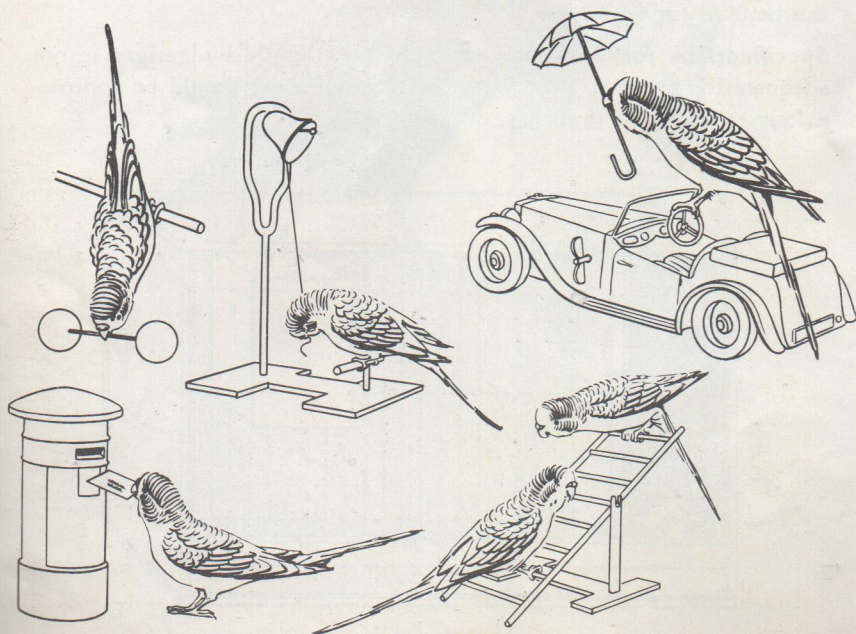
Climbing Down—Learning to descend a ladder may call for more practice. If your pet remains on the top rung, hold your hand above his body with your thumb and forefinger alongside his neck; slip your little finger under his tail and urge him down gently.



Beak Tricks—It is natural for a budgie to pick up and hold things in its strong little beak. You can easily teach your pet an astonishing number of tricks by supplying him with toys he can be taught to pull, push, or crank.

Make sure the object you want him to hold is small enough for his beak, low enough for his reach, and light enough for his strength. Hold your pet loosely in your hand and press the object against his beak until he opens his beak and grasps it. Use gentle persuasion to show him what you expect him to do with the toy.

Variations and Combinations—The real fun begins after your pet has learned the four basic skills. There is practically no limit to the variations and combinations of these simple tricks that you and your pet can develop together. For example, you can teach your bird to walk a tight-rope carrying a toy umbrella, or to climb a “finger ladder” by transferring the bird alternately from the forefinger on one hand to the forefinger on the other. The illustrations below will give you additional ideas. Your own ingenuity—and your pet’s—will suggest many others. Be careful not to overtire your pet during the training sessions. Remember that you may become so engrossed in the fun you are having that you may lose track of time. Follow the general rules in this chapter and almost before you know it, your little pet will be an accomplished performer.



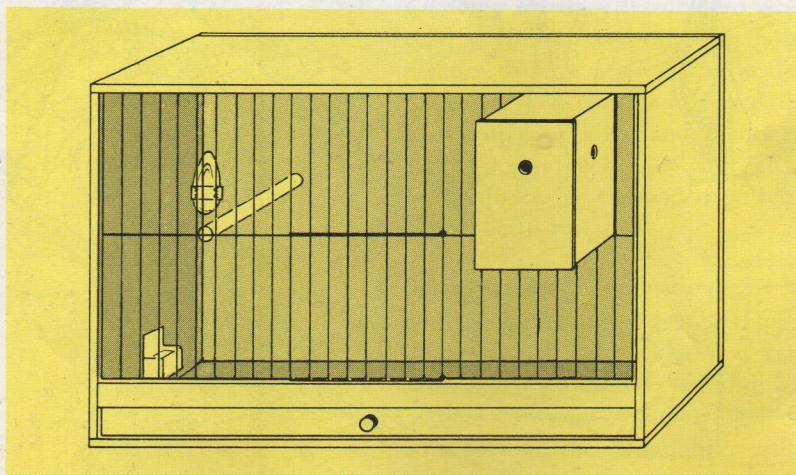
BUDGERIGAR BREEDING

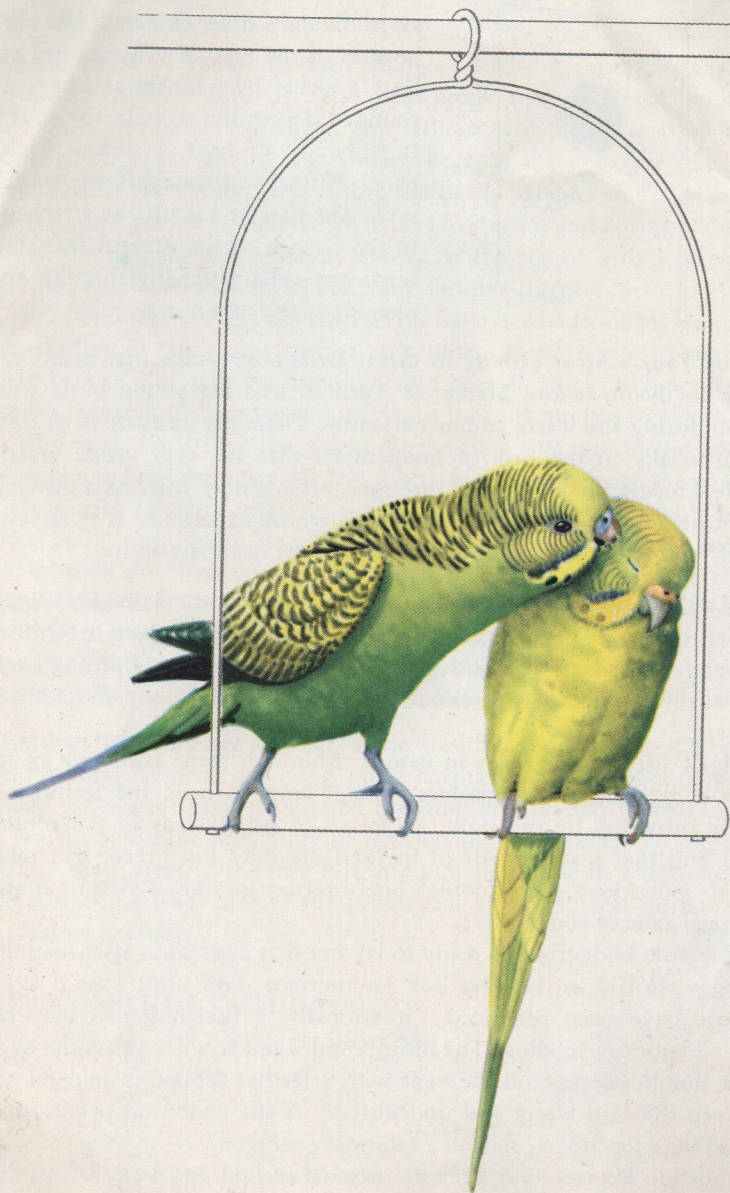
Budgie breeding is an interesting and profitable hobby—easy enough for the beginner, and yet an endless challenge to the expert.

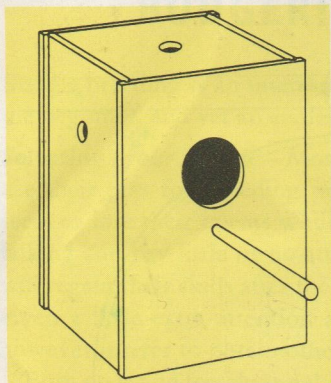
Selecting your Stock—Most owners wonder whether they should use their pets for breeding purposes. It is true that trained birds often seem to lose their talents while they are with their mates. They may stop talking and pay little or no attention to their owners. In most cases they will regain their skills after they are separated from their mates, if they are given a little extra attention and a short “refresher” course. You may, however, prefer to obtain other birds for breeding.

Both male and female should be healthy and fully feathered. Budgerigars of different colours will mate, but most beginners prefer to start with a pair with similar colouration. Selective breeding to produce certain colours requires a specialized knowledge of genetics and is best deferred until after you have raised a few nests of birds. Hen budgerigars should be around a year old before their first mating; cocks at least 10 months. Females up to four years old or more can be bred successfully, and males can be used for 6 or 7 years.

Specifications for Housing—A cage for a single budgerigar is not adequate for breeding purposes. The breeding cage should be approximately 16 by 18 by 36 inches, or larger.







Nest Boxes—You can build the nest boxes yourself or buy them at a pet store. Designs differ in detail, but the bottom of the box should measure at least 5 inches by 5 inches and have a rounded depression to hold the eggs. It is handy to have a sliding back panel. No nesting materials are necessary. The nest box is usually attached to the outside of the cage so that the birds can enter it readily through an opening in the cage wires.

Time of Year—Most experts in Great Britain advocate that breeding should not begin before March or April so that the young birds will develop during the warm summer months. There are exceptions to this rule, especially in the case of budgerigars that are kept inside under equable temperature conditions throughout the whole year. As a general rule, however, and particularly for those whose experience is relatively limited, it is wiser not to put up the nest boxes until late spring.

Egg Laying—Good condition is especially important in breeding, both for the quality of the eggs and for the extra effort involved in feeding the young. Make sure that all the items in French's Natural Feeding Diet are available each day, and avoid bothering the birds any more than necessary.

Budgies breed in colonies in nature. Although some pairs will mate readily in a home by themselves, others seem to need the feeling of security provided by the sight or sound of other birds in the room. If you find that a single pair of budgerigars does not breed, you may want to join forces with another bird breeder or obtain two or more additional pairs of your own.

The female budgerigar is ready to lay her first eggs soon after mating. The eggs are laid in the nest box on alternate days until 5 or 6 eggs or more have been produced. Occasionally, a breeding hen may be troubled with egg binding. The bird trembles and strains to pass the egg. If this should happen, oil the vent with a feather dipped in mineral oil and keep the bird warm and undisturbed. If the condition persists for longer than a few hours, consult a veterinary surgeon.

Incubation begins soon after the first or second egg is laid, and the first chick is hatched after an incubation period of 18 to 20 days. The

other chicks usually hatch in the same order the eggs were laid. Do not disturb the parents while they are in the nest box. If you wish to peep into the box, wait until both adults are outside.

Chick Cycle—Newly hatched budgie chicks are tiny, weak little creatures without feathers. The hen keeps them covered while she incubates the remaining eggs. You will see a definite variation in size and development among the chicks, because the eggs are hatched at intervals. It takes a few days before the newly hatched chicks' eyes open. Within the first week, fluffy down begins to appear, and during the second week the first feathers begin to show. At the age of 4 to 5 weeks, the chicks are well feathered and are ready to leave the nest.

Provided that the parents themselves have been adequately nourished, the feeding of the young birds is no problem to the owner. The parents take care of this task by bringing up a special, thick, milky substance which forms in their crops and forcing it into the mouths of the chicks.

The adult birds feed the chicks all the time they are in the nest and continue to feed them for the first few days after they leave the nest box.

It is wise to start scattering a few tablespoonfuls of French's Budgie Seed and Conditioning Food on the floor of the breeding cage each day as soon as the first chick leaves the nest. When the young birds can quite clearly take care of themselves, and are procuring the whole of their daily diet without difficulty, they may be separated from the parents. You can do this by transferring the chicks to a separate cage, or by dividing the cage in half with a board or wire screen.

Number of Clutches—While some healthy budgies can successfully rear several clutches of young birds during the twelve-month period, many experts recommend limited breeding and rearing to two clutches a year to avoid the possibility of over-taxing the parents. To put a stop to breeding, remove the nest box and put the female in a separate cage. Overbreeding leads also to the production of chicks that do not thrive or feather properly.

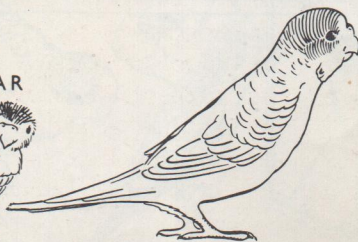
DEVELOPMENT OF A BUDGERIGAR



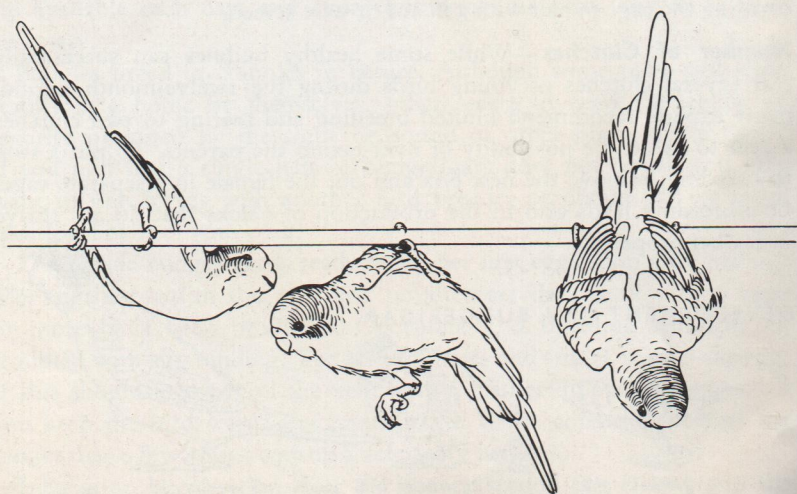
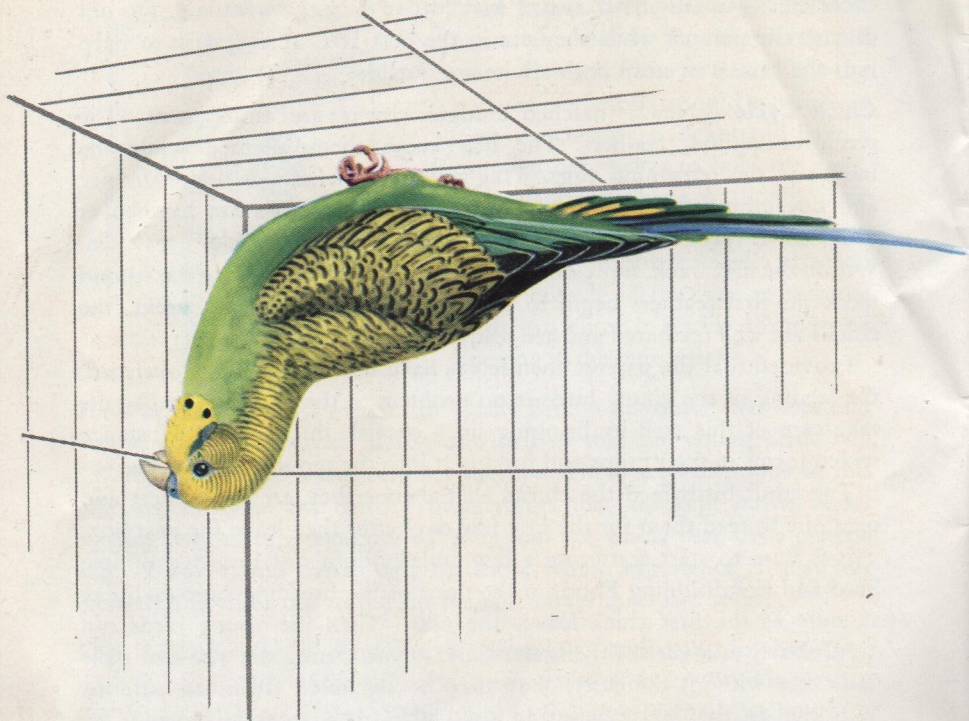
1 1/2 weeks old



2 1/2 weeks old



5 weeks old



HEALTH HINTS

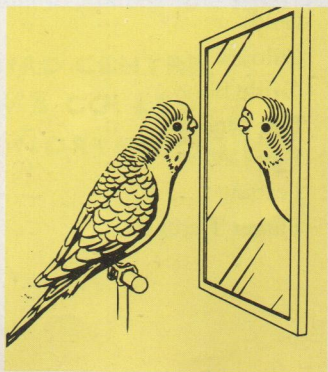
Owners sometimes become alarmed when their pet brings up his food. Budgerigars, like dogs and many other animals, have the protective ability to vomit readily to get rid of a foreign substance they have eaten by mistake. In most cases it is nothing to worry about.

A male budgerigar more than six or eight months old will sometimes bring up his food if he is in breeding condition but hasn't a mate. In this case, he is going through the motions of feeding an imaginary mate and may attempt to "feed" his mirror, some other shiny object, his toes, or a favourite toy. If you make sure he has plenty of exercise and remove any mirrors or other objects of his attention the condition will pass.

Insects—Budgerigars frequently preen and pick their feathers to keep them in trim. If the cage and surroundings are kept clean, parasites are not usually a problem. In rare cases there may be a need to cope with red mites. To test whether red mites are present, cover the cage with a white cloth at night. These parasites leave the bird in the daytime. If there are actually red mites you will find some of them on the cloth in the morning. Run a hot iron over the cloth to destroy them. Remove the bird and dust him with a suitable powder which your pet-shop sells. Make doubly sure that the powder in question is safe to use with budgerigars. Scrub the cage with a hot "Dettol" solution. Be sure all cracks and crevices are thoroughly cleaned. Rinse and allow the cage to dry before replacing the bird. Repeat this treatment once a week as long as the white cloth test shows the presence of mites.

Accidents—Bone fractures are rare in budgies, but if you have reason to believe your bird has broken a wing, foot, or leg, it is advisable to seek the help of a veterinary surgeon.

Illness—You might expect the budgie to be a frail creature, but this delicate grace is very deceptive. Actually he is a tough little bird and far more resistant to diseases than are many other pets. Of course, no form of animal life is completely immune



from illness. Should your budgie ever appear to be feeling below par, keep him warm, keep him dry, keep him quiet, and protect him from draughts.

If the bird sneezes, coughs, looks ruffled, and seems sluggish, he may have a slight cold. The hardy little budgie usually has little difficulty working off a cold or other minor upset if kept warm, dry and quiet. However, if the bird continues to appear unhealthy and you notice watery droppings of abnormal colour, it is wiser to consult a veterinary surgeon rather than attempt to treat the bird with home remedies.

Remember that good nutrition plays an important part in building a budgerigar's natural resistance to illness. Don't take chances with the health of your pet. Make sure he always has the protection afforded by a planned, balanced menu such as French's Natural Feeding Diet.

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FRENCH'S PET BIRD INSTITUTE

Pet foods bearing the French's label have enjoyed the confidence of bird owners ever since the turn of the century, when the R. T. French Company in America pioneered in the manufacture of packaged bird seed. French's Pet Bird Institute has been established in the company's New York headquarters as a centre for continuing research on the care and feeding of budgerigars and other feathered pets.

In the Institute's laboratories and experimental aviary, a staff of trained specialists and special consultants studies the effects of different diets and conditions on succeeding generations of birds. Their research findings appear both in technical journals and in the form of popular handbooks such as this one.

The Institute staff also answers thousands of letters a year sent in by pet bird owners throughout the world. If you have a particular question not fully covered in the foregoing pages, our experts in Peterborough, Northants, will be glad to advise you without cost or obligation if you will write explaining your problem. Tell us your bird's sex, how it behaves, what steps you have taken, and what you are feeding it. Address your letter to:

**FRENCH'S PET BIRD CENTRE,
JOSEPH FARROW & CO. LTD.,
PETERBOROUGH, NORTHANTS.**

